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THE
HERTFORDSHIRE
HUNT
1880



A faint, grayscale background image of a classical building with several columns and a pediment, possibly a library or a government building, is visible behind the text.

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THE HERTFORDSHIRE HUNT.



THE HERTFORDSHIRE HUNT.

A POEM.

Dedicated to the Members and Supporters of the Hunt.

• BY

D R A G O N.

The Proceeds will be devoted to the ROYAL AGRICULTURAL BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION.

London:

A. H. BAILY AND CO.

ROYAL EXCHANGE BUILDINGS.

1880.

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LONDON:
R. CLAY, SONS, AND TAYLOR,
BREAD STREET HILL.

INTRODUCTION.

THE season 1879-1880 has been very disappointing to Hunting men. Prolonged frost has kept us at home, and we have all felt time hanging heavily on our hands. Having few good runs to record, the idea of putting an account of a run into verse occurred to me, and the habit of thinking in rhyme was soon acquired. It proved an amusement during the long dreary days we were shut up by hard weather, while we ought to have been enjoying ourselves in the field. The following verses will show whether that time has been wasted or not. In some of them, poetry or rhythm, or whatever they call it, has been sacrificed to truth, and in others, truth or nonsense made to give way to rhyming ; but the results, amusing as they have been to the writer during the process of concoction, would not have been thought worth publishing, had not an appeal for funds decided me to bring them

out for the benefit of the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution.

This is one that all Hunting men should patronise, knowing how we are beholden to our best friends for the sport we enjoy, and that at this time they are more than ever in want of our aid and consideration.

If any one objects to have his name taken in vain, let him remember it is done good-naturedly in a good cause, and the only wish of the writer is that he may be able to hand over a good sum to the Fund.

THE HERTFORDSHIRE HUNT,

1880.

THE meet was at the Kennels, a glorious hunting day,
How happy do we feel as we mount and ride away
To meet good friends and true all brought together here
To share the merry chase they come from far and near.

It is a goodly field, they come from every side,
So 'tis no good to say who's who till they begin to ride ;
A run soon shakes off duffers, gives the rest a chance,
Fifty minutes pretty fast our pleasures will enhance.

What a thrill runs through our veins as hounds move off to draw,
The horse is just as keen to go, with some 'tis often more ;
So when we reach the cover-side and each takes up his place,
You can easy tell the right sort by looking at his face.

Though life seemed dull and dreary while all looked black as
night,
There's still one thing worth living for which gives us true delight ;
For hark in yonder Woodlands, and hear those merry sounds,
There's never sweeter music than the hunting cry of hounds !

Yoi, over now, my darlings, have at him there, my boys ;
A whimper swells to chorus full and now begin our joys ;
As down the ride we gallop, the dirt is up to their hocks,
What's that crossed over? 'Tis, by Jove! a thund'ring big
dog fox.

Those coffee-housing beggars will head him now, I fear ;
Why the blazes do the duffers stick themselves out here ?
No ! there's some one letting at them, time enough I say,
If they cannot take a lesson they had better stay away.

The scent is good in cover, they're close on to his brush,
So let's get to the open, and so avoid the crush ;
Crashing through the bushes, we reach the cover's edge,
That gate's a bad take off to jump. Come up, hoss, have the
hedge.

Charles has viewed him, what a scream ! as only he can holloa,
'Twould rouse the dead, while as for us, it makes all keen to
follow ;
The old dog hounds all fly to it, if puppy's left behind,
There's young Will Adcock's cracking thong will surely make
him mind.

Away over the open, the beauties go apace,
So set your horse a-going as if to ride a race ;
For when they run like that you must never lose a minute,
But keep your heart in the right place, and you will then be
in it.

'Tis time to look around now to see who's going best,
Take note of those in front and guess at all the rest ;
It is hard sometimes to find them, and remember all who're
out,
When hounds run hard there's plenty else always to think
about.

Bob Ward goes well as ever, keen as any boy,
His quick grey eye has viewed his fox, "Forrard !" he cries,
with joy ;
Worth going any distance to hear that splendid voice,
Dull and cold must be the heart that does not now rejoice.

Lord Dacre on Poor Jack rides close up to their sterns,
Careful, as when master, not to press 'em at the turns ;
Lord Kilcoursie's on a good one, he always gets a start,
And goes across a country quick straight as any dart.

Colonel Somerset, Captain Young, and with them Captain
Blake,
Three masters on Committee, great trouble they all take
To show us sport, so surely we should be very pleased
To make their duties lighter, and see their labours eased.

And Teddy Vyse, the Treasurer, polite to every one,
He might be down on some of them, nor be so often done ;
A Treasurer should always have a tongue both smooth and
rough,
To let those shufflers have it hot who do not give enough.

When well enough to ride a horse, all like to see Ames Lyde,
He has our interests at heart and o'er the Hunt Club does
preside ;
From the Hyde comes Arthur Flower, well-mounted and well-
dressed,
And galloping Wills from Sherrards never is at rest.

Mr. Longman and Bob Worrall leave th' Old Berkeley when
they can,
And come to meet their neighbours, the sires closely scan ;
The best of friendly feeling always here prevails,
'Tis not so in all counties where sport so often fails.

Great Mr. Rawle, of Berkhamstead, who hunts the noble stag,
He likes fox-hunting, too, unless they're let out of a bag ;
Jack the whip his son is there, and Treasurer Charley Miles,
Who always wears a flower, and is fond of jumping stiles.

There's Mrs. Bowers Edwards, whose pen is never quiet,
But here I'd better draw the line, or get it hot for riot ;
Mr. Edwards and his brothers can cross a country quick,
The best of men to ask advice if any horse is sick.

We're nearing Mr. Greenfield who lives at Beechwood Park,
The best of fox-preservers, my words now duly mark :
Though not a hunting man he always keeps a fox,
A rare good lot of wild ones too, not let out from a box.

When hounds run on to Ashridge, take care they do not
change,
Over all Earl Brownlow's property foxes freely range,
The same in Gaddesden Covers where Mr. Halsey lives,
Our western county member a good example gives.

At Hatfield Park, Lord Salisbury often gives a meet,
When he can leave affairs of State to enjoy his country seat,
Lord Cranbourne likes a fence, Lady Maud can go as well,
The little ones all love it, and cram along pell mell.

Wheathampsteadbury is the place to get a hearty welcome,
When good John Ransome and his wife invite us to their
home,
The best of every thing is found, when they give us a meet,
And one and all declare with me it is a jolly treat.

Then Gorhambury, Bricket, and Serge Hills well stocked
covers,
Are all well represented by good and true fox lovers,
Lord Grimston, Henry Bailey, and good old Mr. Solley,
Joe Dickenson and his young chip, always looking jolly.

Mr. Hibbert too, from Mundon, and Mr. Solley's son,
Know how to cross a country as well as any one,
There is a well known chestnut that often jumps a gate,
When his owner takes the fancy, and thinks that he is late.

From Wellburys Hills and covers comes Captain Gosling too,
And Messrs. Hughes from Offley can go above a few,
While Duncan Brown, of Digswell, goes like a hunter bold;
And the brothers Wallers names may oft in front be told.

[From Willian comes Charles Swarder surrounded by his sons,
John, Charley, Frank, and Harry, all mounted on good ones,
Whenever they are out, whichever way hounds run,
There's sure to be a Swarder, leading all the fun.]

Jonathan Cox, of Hill End, another good old sort,
They said that he was like to die, but it was only port,
Go call on him, he'll treat you well, with good old English
bounty,
His sons are all good sportsmen too, as any in the county.

Rob Archer steals along in front, though never in a hurry,
How well we can remember full many a pleasant scurry
With his small pack of harriers, in happy days gone by,
And when we wish them back again, we surely do not lie.

Ted Sworder there has now a pack of which he is the master,
And huntsman too, while this I know, they are a trifle faster,
For when they get a hare in view she has but little chance,
So they are welcome every where for many a merry dance.

From Almshoebury's well kept farm hear Henry Robert's
voice,
With sharpened wit his ready tongue has always something
choice ;
For all but true bred sportsmen such horror he'll evince,
That when he lets out at them, I'll bet the others wince.

Mr. Fenwick, though a welter, can always hold his own,
His daughters, if they lose him, can find their way alone,
The Crawleys too, of Stockwood, come from a sporting race,
We often see a young one lead when hounds can go the pace.

Mr. Robins, a staunch supporter, is always at the meet
With his son, both good examples set, their costume is
complete ;
In these days of careless mufti, affected by the mobs,
'Tis well to know the gentlemen, distinguished from the snobs.

Of all the hunt the brothers Horn are noted for their dress,
They ride with care, for fear a fall should make them in a
mess,
So take care you do not splash them, to give their valet toil,
'Twould grieve the honest fellow to see them smeared with
soil.

Scargil, with his eye-glass stuck tight into his hat,
Can see to hold his own unless he loses that.
Carlisle too, often leads, except upon a misty day
He likes to find a pilot to help him on his way.

Charles Woolham and John Lloyd are never far apart,
And when you cross the latter's farm harden well your heart,
The ditches take some doing, and well we know the lark
When a stranger gets amongst them with a horse not up to
mark.

Well known is William Lucas, he is the farmer's friend,
He helps them through their troubles, and hopes that times
may mend ;
Long life to such as him, good health may he enjoy,
And good sport too, for hunting will all grievances alloy,

Don't forget old Mossoo Michaud, forrard there he goes,
Standing in his stirrups, at right angles are his toes,
Blessed with the best of tempers he stands a lot of chaff,
Take care how you give it though, or he will turn the laugh.

The Hanbury family all go well and dearly love to ride,
If fence is only big enough it surely will be tried ;
And Kemble too, from Potter's Bar, can shove along his grey,
Take home a pocket full of eggs, nor break one on the way.

William Howe and Whitbread Roberts are yeomen good and bold,
Their luncheon is a benefit when Harpenden is cold,
For at the races always they are certain to be found
With such a jolly spread laid out upon the ground.

The veteran, Tom Hills, who hails from Walkernbury—
His age with his old mare will count close on a century ;
Young men who try to follow them had better have a care,
For it takes a biggish place to stop the old man and his mare.

Charles Hayward and Hugh Smythe know how to choose a stud,
They have to get some strong ones too, to take them through the mud ;
The Kidmans and the Smythes are always pretty handy,
If Tom gets down and loses his nag he likes a drop of brandy.

Jem Selby leaves his coach to-day to have a jolly hunt,
Sends along a sturdy wheeler through everything in front,
For weight will tell both ways, he crashes and he climbs,
We little ones can follow them, so look out for Old Times.

But the field is getting straggled as pace begins to tell,
Come on, good horse, you're fit to go, as sound as any bell ;
As racing over grass we go, fences are so strong,
Dirty coats tell the sad tale that good men have gone wrong.

They're getting closer to him now, see all their hackles up,
The old dog hounds are falling back, the leader is a pup ;
Tally ho ! he gets a view, the whole pack make a rush,
Whoo, whoop, they get him ; tear him up, a lady wants the brush.

If any names not mentioned of those who saw this run,
The owners must excuse me, for I can't see every one,
I've tried to do my duty, and no man can do more,
So now will have to cut it short, or you'll vote me a bore.

Life would be dull indeed if we could not have a joke,
And if we only stick to chaff bones will ne'er be broke ;
All riding men must fall sometimes, but are not often hurt,
So even best of friends are chaffed when smothered up with
dirt.

Some people don't like schoolboys, but this shows want of
sense,
They say they're always in the way when they get near a
fence,
No, teach the young idea to go as early as he may,
When we get old he'll be grown up, and help us on the way.

Bruisers should remember they must not always ride,
For when young wheat is rising farmers' tempers will be tried
If they see a lot of horse tracks right across the field ;
So keep along the headlands and the sore will soon be healed.

I love to see a farmer riding well in front
For then we know we're following the backbone of the hunt ;
But if a patent screw or tinker tailor chaps
Get too forrard, press on hounds, they get it hot perhaps.

Life is like the hunting-field—in both we must go straight ;
If fence or trial is difficult, look out for a gate ;
Keep your eye on leading principles, as on the leading hounds,
Never care for anything while you keep within the bounds.

Out hunting we must remember kind friends who've passed
away ;

How often a house stands empty where but the other day
We were sure of a hearty welcome as we rode up to the door,
Though the kind hand that gripped our own will do so now no
more.

A sportsman's always ready to help a friend in need,
To catch his horse, or pick him up, when hungry give a feed,
To them I now appeal that they may freely give
To this good Fund a hearty help that others too may live.

Now, farmers, listen here, there's nothing like the chase
To bring out the pluck and judgment of the good old English
race ;

So when we break your fences and ride across your crops,
Think how you are supporting the best of England's props.

In old age if you're wanting, or by hard times you're hit,
Only treat the sportsmen fairly, they'll help you all a bit ;
But pull all well together, live and well let live,
You never will regret it, for we will freely give.

THE END.



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